



CALIFORNIA  
DEPARTMENT OF  
EDUCATION

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**JACK O'CONNELL**

State Superintendent of  
Public Instruction

PHONE: (916) 319-0800

May 3, 2004

Dear District STAR Coordinators:

### **GOLDEN STATE SEAL MERIT DIPLOMA ELIGIBILITY**

As you are aware, the Golden State Examination (GSE) program was repealed by Assembly Bill 1266, Chapter 573, Statutes of 2003. However, *Education Code* Section 51452 states that the State Board of Education (SBE) may designate other subject matter examinations that are deemed appropriately rigorous as the means by which students may demonstrate mastery of the high school curriculum. In order to continue the Golden State Seal Merit Diploma, the SBE adopted regulations at its March 2004 board meeting to allow the use of specified California Standards Test (CST) scores, previously earned GSE results, or a combination of the two to qualify for the Golden State Seal Merit Diploma. The new regulations are now in effect and will be available for viewing at <http://www.calregs.com>.

The 8½ x 11 inch paper version of the Golden State Seal Merit Diploma that was awarded to eligible seniors in previous years is no longer available. Beginning this year, districts/charter schools will receive two Golden State Seal Merit Diploma insignias for each eligible senior: a gold embossed insignia to be affixed to the student's high school diploma and a black and white insignia to be affixed to the student's transcript [*Education Code* Section 51453 (b)]. The insignias will be available for distribution in two to three weeks.

Each school district that confers high school diplomas is responsible for maintaining appropriate records in order to identify eligible students and shall affix a Golden State Seal Merit Diploma insignia to the diploma and transcript of each qualifying student (*Education Code* Section 51454). The following attached documents are provided to assist with this process. They also will be available at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr>.

- *Eligibility Requirements for the Golden State Seal Merit Diploma*  
This document details the examinations and scores students may use to qualify for the Golden State Seal Merit Diploma.
- *Certification of Award Summary Sheet*  
This spreadsheet may be used by school/district staff to identify eligible students and verify that all eligibility requirements have been met.

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- *Insignia Request Form*

This form is to be completed by districts/charter schools and submitted to the California Department of Education (CDE), Standards and Assessment Division.

After verifying that students have met all eligibility requirements, the district/charter school shall complete and submit the *Insignia Request Form*. This year, due to the delay required by the regulation process, CDE will accept a fax of the request form; the original then must be mailed to the address on the form. In addition, this year, districts may submit more than one request form (i.e., as they receive information from their schools). Requests will be processed according to the date received. Request forms may be faxed to Vicki Perez, Standards and Assessment Division, at (916) 319-0962 or (916) 319-0969.

Please share this information with your high school principals and counselors. Thank you for your patience during the regulation process. If you have any questions about the Golden State Seal Merit Diploma, contact the Standards and Assessment Division of the California Department of Education at (916) 445-8765 (telephone), (916) 319-0969 (fax), or [star@cde.ca.gov](mailto:star@cde.ca.gov) (e-mail).

Sincerely,



Deb Sigman, Director  
Standards and Assessment Division  
DS:rd

Attachments

cc: County and District Superintendents  
Charter School Directors  
Regional Assessment Network